

Andrea Marie Breiling

Kissing the Glass

Jun 7 — Jul 20, 2024 | Paris, Turenne

Almine Rech Paris, Turenne is pleased to present *Kissing the Glass*, Andrea Marie Breiling's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from June 7 to July 20, 2024.

Andrea Marie Breiling, the American contemporary artist known for her large-scale signature spray paint paintings, presents *Kissing the Glass*, a romantic and powerfully feminine “poem to Paris,” as she describes it, her visual distillation of the city’s eternal essence. This presentation of new works which vary in size are each uniquely drenched in rich pinks, shimmering purples, and deep magentas. Her collection beautifully expresses the heartfelt emotional connection she has forged with Paris - something she believes is “...a feminine connection the city feeds us, a feeling so deep and alive that we can only experience it when we’re there in person.”

In Breiling’s previous work, she relied upon a wide spectrum of spray paint caps and nozzles - fat, narrow, chunky - to generate unique textures, depth, and surface effects in her work, and she utilized energetic layering of colors to produce her signature atmospheric, complex, and dynamic compositions. However, we now see Breiling dialing back her frenetic gesturing, and instead practicing a more confident and measured approach to applying color, resulting in works which are much more - in Greenbergian terms - focused on the paint itself and the surface; that is, they offer far less dimensionality and appear significantly more flat. We see very clearly here in these new works that Breiling has made a major shift in her practice to stake her claim in color field abstraction.

In addition, we now start to see her flatter application of paint become accentuated by streaks of paint dripping across the canvas. These eye-catching drips are borne of high-output spray applied close to the surface until the paint pools, allowing the artist to leverage gravity in spreading and mixing color (not unlike Helen Frankenthaler or Frank Bowling pouring paint on horizontal canvases to let the paint colors intertwine naturally of their own accord). In fact, Breiling used her recent 4 month artist’s residency at the CCA in Mallorca, Spain, to experiment with a variation of this technique. As she recounts, it was not uncommon to find her outdoors laying stretchers on the ground and spreading hemp ropes across the canvases before applying spray paint as a way to achieve contact- and brush-free color blocking effects on these works. Taking her Frankenthaler-esque approach a step further, Breiling says she would even, at times, use her bare hands to claw and smear the paint while tipping the canvases on all four edges to influence color mixing and help guide the paint’s directional dripping across the surface. Although in a few of these works, some gesturing remains in the form of her body moving along with the spray can tip as it interfaces with the canvas, many other works show that she has virtually abandoned any semblance of gesturing.

For example, her large work, *Holy Slit (a permanence pursuit)*, showcases Breiling’s greatly simplified approach to applying color, as the resulting painting features an emotionally striking and unmistakably feminine pink V centered on a powerful and post-painterly flat background field composed of matte aubergine, magenta, and crimson. She has greatly minimized gestures, and the surface is not nearly as 3 dimensional as in many of her past works, making her ode to Paris come alive in this powerful and fiercely feminine work.

During a studio visit in Mallorca while she was making this body of work, Breiling revealed that the original title for her show was *Cerca de Ti* - a Mallorcan phrase meaning “Near You.” Even at that early stage of making the work, she was inspired by Paris and what the city represents to her. In her words, “*Paris has a romantic and timeless feminine presence that wraps itself around us each and every time we visit. I want this work to capture the essence of what it’s like to be immersed in Paris - it’s this blend of high fashion and old streets, beautiful people surrounded by stunning architecture, museums with parks and flower-adorned cafes on every corner...*” Midway through painting a work that resembled a burgundy and pink field as viewed through a foggy window, Breiling’s friend and fellow artist-in-residency, Blair Saxon-Hill, arrived at Breiling’s studio and, wanting to say hello but not interrupt Andrea’s process, quietly slid a note under the studio’s glass door. Written with a flourish in bright red marker, the well-wishing note was signed “*Kissing the Glass*,” an apt and poetic phrase that Breiling quickly adopted as the show’s new title, as it perfectly ties together her work’s powerful femininity and the romantic essence of Paris which inspired it all. “*Much like a bow*,” Breiling says, “*...a very pink and powerful feminine Parisian bow!*”